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MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL IN 1992

Biennialization or triennialization of subjects on the agenda of the Governing Council

INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-seventh session (1990), the Governing Council reviewed its working methods as part of an ongoing exercise. In paragraph 6 of decision 90/23 of 23 June 1990, the Council requested the Administrator, inter alia, to examine further possibilities to biennialize or even triennialize specific items and the high-level debate of the Governing Council and to submit his proposals to the Council.

2. The possibilities for biennialization or triennialization have been explored and discussed with the Members of the Governing Council at an informal consultation on 2 November 1990. At the organizational meeting for 1991, the Council discussed and, in its decision 91/1 of 22 February 1991, took note of the proposals contained in the report of the Administrator on the rationalization of the work of the Governing Council (DP/1991/3). During that debate, members of the Governing Council expressed the wish further to discuss proposals for biennialization of subjects on the agenda of the Council at the thirty-eighth session.

I. HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE

3. By paragraph 1 of part I of its decision 81/37 of 27 June 1981, the Governing Council decided "to allocate and orient a well-defined part of its deliberations to major policy issues and emerging development in the operational activities carried out under its supervision on which immediate action is necessary"; and "that the agenda of the Council at each session will

include, as a main item, policy reviews"; and further "to define at each session which policy area or subject will be reviewed at the following session"; and, in paragraph 3 of the same decision, "to hold a short part of its annual sessions at a high, senior policy-maker level".

4. By its decision 91/1, the Governing Council decided, on an experimental basis, to dispense with the general debate in budget years (odd years), beginning in 1991, thereby making a three-week session possible.

5. The Governing Council also agreed that the objective to have a high-level segment dedicated to major policy reviews by the Governing Council remains valid and should be encouraged. It also agreed that the high-level policy reviews take place every even year. At the thirty-eighth session (1991), the Governing Council may therefore wish to define policy area or subjects which will be reviewed in 1992.

II. BIENNIALIZATION OR TRIENNIALIZATION OF SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

A. Previous decisions by the Governing Council

6. In paragraph 3 (f) of section I of its decision 81/37, the Governing Council decided to conduct a broad policy review of other funds and programmes under its supervision biennially. In paragraph 2 of section III of its decision 87/1 and in paragraphs 1 and 2 of section A of the annex, the Governing Council approved on an experimental basis to biennialize reports of the special funds administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) other than the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). It was also decided that reports concerning matters on which consensus was not achieved at previous sessions, relating to amendments of the financial regulations of UNDP, would be taken up biennially.

7. In the addendum to the note by the President of the Governing Council to the thirty-seventh session on the working methods of the Council (DP/1990/82/Add.1) it was stated that further progress could be made in the biennialization of funds and programmes under the supervision of the Council. The President regretted that the Council had not been able to adhere to its decisions 81/37 and 87/1, as recent agendas revealed. The President suggested that the Council might wish to consider whether annually recurring items could be reviewed biennially. No decision was taken on the concrete proposals made by the President of the Governing Council.

8. The Governing Council will have considerably fewer subjects to deal with at the thirty-eighth session than at the thirty-seventh session. The reduction of subjects through biennialization or even triennialization has already been accommodated by the Council when it adopted fewer decisions in 1990 than the year before (54 in 1990 against 68 in 1989) and limited the requests for reporting. Further, the number of items on the agenda have been reduced by clustering related subjects.

9. At the organizational meeting for 1991, the Governing Council, by its decision 91/1, indicated its willingness to continue its practice when drafting decisions to consider carefully in each case, when the request for a report is made, the possibilities for biennialization or even triennialization.

B. Proposals by the Administrator

10. The Governing Council may select some subjects for in-depth review every second or third year. This does not exclude reporting to the Governing Council in years between the in-depth reviews. By its decision 91/1, the Council agreed to the proposals contained in document DP/1991/3, inter alia, to indicate in its decisions whether a report requested is for debate and possible decision-taking or for information only. Reports requested in years not scheduled for in-depth reviews of the subject in question should accordingly be for information only. For example, this could apply to special topics, such as the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), or additional reports by funds, such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

11. The following proposals are based on the previous decisions taken by the Governing Council in decisions 81/37 and 87/1 and the suggestions made by the President in the note contained in document DP/1990/82/Add.1. While the main items will remain on the agenda of the Council every year, some of the subjects regularly being discussed under these items may, it is suggested, be biennialized or even triennialized.

12. As a general rule, the programme-level activities could be scheduled for in-depth review every second or third year. In its decision 90/19 of 22 June 1990, the Governing Council has already requested the Administrator to report on a triennial basis, beginning at the fortieth session (1993), on women in development. It is also suggested that technical cooperation among developing countries be reviewed in-depth every second year, in coordination with the biennial meetings of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. The Governing Council might, in its decisions on other programme-level activities at the thirty-eighth session, indicate in each case whether the next in-depth review is to be scheduled for 1993 or 1994. The programme-level activities are discussed under the same item as the annual report of the Administrator; the annual report may cover relevant programme-level activities in years when they are not scheduled for in-depth review.

13. Special programmes of assistance of a more permanent character could be biennialized. However, decisions concerning the biennialization of special programmes of assistance should ensure the necessary flexibility for consideration of urgent matters and make allowance for subjects which may warrant consideration more frequently than every other year.

14. In its decisions 81/37 and 87/1, the Governing Council has, inter alia, established rules for biennialization of other funds and programmes (see para. 6 above). In the light of General Assembly resolution 45/175 of

18 December 1990 concerning rationalization of the work of the Third Committee and the decision in section I of the annex to include UNIFEM under item 5 of its agenda on a biennial basis, beginning 1991, it is suggested that all funds and programmes administered by UNDP be taken up for in-depth review every second year.

15. The Governing Council may also consider biennialization of the following two subjects, as suggested by the President of the Governing Council in his note of 23 April 1990 (DP/1990/82/Add.1): Implementation of selected country programmes; and United Nations system regular and extrabudgetary expenditures.

16. In order to avoid duplication, it is recommended that the reporting on steps taken by UNDP in response to action taken by the General Assembly and by other organs of the United Nations system be suspended. Information concerning action taken by UNDP is, in most cases, already available in other documentation provided to the Governing Council.

17. The following is an overview of subjects considered at the thirty-seventh session (1990) and subjects scheduled to be considered at the thirty-eighth session, with an allocation of subjects for in-depth review in the coming years, as suggested in paragraphs 12-16 above. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations technical cooperation activities are not included in these proposals:

Annual report of the Administrator and programme-level activities	Years for consideration of items			
Annual report of the Administrator	1990	1991	1992	1993
Human development	1990	1991	-	1993
Management Development Programme	1990	1991	-	1993/94
Technical cooperation among developing countries	1990	1991	-	1993
Non-governmental and grass-roots organizations	1990	1991	-	1993/94
Women in development	1990	1991	-	1993
Role of UNDP in combating HIV and AIDS	1990	1991	-	1993
Role of UNDP in the 1990s	1990	-	-	-
Micro-capital grants	1990	-	1992	-

Annual report of the Administrator and programme-level activities	Years for consideration of items			
Promotion of national capacity: skilled personnel	1990	-	-	-
Environment	1990	-	-	1993
Special programmes of assistance				
UNDP Gulf Task Force	-	1991	-	-
Role of UNDP in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990	1990	1991	-	1993 (For possible successor arrangements)
Transport and Communications Decade in Africa	1990	1991	-	1993
Questions relating to Namibia	1990	1991	-	-
Least developed countries	1990	1991	1992	-
Refugees, displaced persons and returnees (humanitarian affairs)	1990	1991	1992	-
Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America	1990	-	-	-
Assistance to national liberation movements	1990	-	1992	-
Assistance to the Palestinian people	1990	1991	-	1993
Programme implementation				
Implementation of selected country programmes	1990	1991	-	1993
Evaluation	1990	1991	1992	1993
Evaluation of the mid-term review process	1990	-	-	-
National execution	1990	1991	1992	-

Annual report of the Administrator and programme-level activities	Years for consideration of items			
Programme planning				
Country and intercountry programmes and projects	1990	1991	1992	1993
Fifth programming cycle	1990	1991	1992	1993
Funding strategy	1990	1991	-	-
Support costs: successor arrangements	1990	1991	1992	-
Sectoral support	1990	1991	-	-
Project Development Facility	1990	-	-	-
Reports on mid-term reviews of country and intercountry programmes	1990	-	-	1993
United Nations Population Fund	1990	1991	1992	1993
United Nations Technical Cooperation Activities	1990	1991	1992	1993
Other funds and programmes				
United Nations Capital Development Fund	-	1991	1992	-
United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration and United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development	1990	1991	-	1993
United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office	1990	1991	1992	-
United Nations Development Fund for Women	1990	1991	-	1993
United Nations Volunteers programme	1990	-	1992	-
Focal point for short-term advisory services	1990	-	-	-
Financial, budgetary and administrative matters				
Annual review of the financial situation (including trust funds)	1990	1991	1992	1993

Annual report of the Administrator and programme-level activities	Years for consideration of items			
Revised budget estimates for biennium	1990	1991	1992	1993
Budget estimates for next biennium	-	1991	-	1993
Audit reports	1990	1991	-	1993
Procurement from developing countries	1990	1991	-	-
Report on the status of management services	1990	-	1992	-
Financial regulations: Matters on which consensus has not yet been achieved	1990	-	1992	-
Financial regulations: Biennialization of financial statements	1990	-	-	-
Ex-post facto reporting	1990	-	-	-
Other separate items or sub-items				
Senior management structure	1990	1991	-	-
Standing Committee for Programme Matters	1990	-	-	1997
Other matters				
United Nations system regular and extrabudgetary technical cooperation expenditures	1990	1991	-	1993
Steps taken by UNDP in response to action taken by the General Assembly and by other organs of the United Nations system	1990	1991	-	-
Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit of interest to UNDP	1990	1991	1992	1993
Matters relating to the work of the Council next year				
Biennialization or triennialization of subjects on the agenda of the Governing Council	1990	1991	-	-

C. Draft provisional agenda for the thirty-ninth session

18. Recalling its decisions 81/37 of 27 June 1981 and 84/44 of 29 June 1984, the Governing Council may wish to approve the draft provisional agenda for the thirty-ninth session contained in the annex.

Annex

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Thirty-ninth session

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.
2. High-level segment: policy review.
3. Annual report of the Administrator for 1991 and programme-level activities.
4. Special programmes of assistance.
5. Programme implementation.
6. Programme planning.
7. United Nations Population Fund.
8. United Nations technical cooperation activities.
9. Other funds and programmes.
10. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters.
11. Other matters.
12. Matters relating to the work of the Council in 1993.